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Theosophy allows a hearing and a fair chance to all. It deems no views—if sincere—entirely destitute of truth. —H. P. BLAVATSKY

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THE DISCOVERY OF LAW

JUST as the universality of Deity must be discovered by each one for himself, coming as a kind of central illumination to increasingly subtle perceptions of man's interdependence, so does awareness of the universality of law follow a long Buddhi-Manasic pilgrimage. Neither Deity nor Law can be grasped by explanation, by teaching or teachings, least of all by supposed revelation. Even the broad and compelling propositions of *The Secret Doctrine* must in this sense fail to be guarantors of knowledge, being rather frames of orientation within which to correlate and order our self-induced efforts at understanding. The fact that H. P. Blavatsky claims that the three propositions are also representations of eternal truths, always known to the initiated, does not produce for us the knowledge of the initiated, but only helps, perhaps, to give us confidence in some of the initiations we ourselves receive in terms of observation and experience.

This Theosophical purview, reiterated so often in H. P. Blavatsky's writings, comes to light with great clarity on page 17 of the Proëm of *The Secret Doctrine,* where the "second assertion" is formally presented. Her statement is in the broadest and most generalized terms, and when it is said that the "absolute universality of that law of periodicity" is "easy to comprehend," this implies that each one must do his own comprehending of the meaning of those rhythms which prevail in all departments of nature. Only then can the meaning of "universal" law emerge in the mind.

The entire statement of the "second assertion" occupies but seven printed lines of the Proëm. Neither the teaching of Karma nor the

teaching of reincarnation, both often regarded as tenets "belonging" to the second proposition, is so much as mentioned. What H.P.B. really does, we might say, is simply to *suggest profound reflection* upon the breadth and scope of natural law as always manifesting in a cyclic pattern.

How easy it is, really, to follow that suggestion! Beginning with the most elementary facts concerning our own bodies, we notice that every moment of continued life depends upon pulsation—the pulsation of the heart and the pulsation of the lungs. A surge of energy, interrupted by rest or relaxation, is the basic rhythm of the physical organism. Throughout nature the same pattern is reflected, even plants "breathing" in cycles of different duration. The molecular patterns are, also, in terms of motions returning to points of origin, and thus preserving the structure and the life of the cell.

What of mental processes and emotions? They too move by pulsation. Intelligence is developed by the periodic *return* of the mind to subjects of observation and contemplation, knowledge and wisdom never springing full blown into existence after a single experience, but requiring repetition of the essential factors comprising the experience, so that scope, meaning and relatedness may gradually emerge. Our emotions are notoriously periodic in their waxing and waning, not alone in the sense that they often fluctuate in a manner beyond our control, but also because they have a rhythm of their own. Just as the moon pulls the tides of earth's seas in a predictable sequence, so do various forces ebb and flow—a fact attested by all the information men have gathered in respect to conception and gestation, and also, in a different way, attested by those who have compiled statistics upon the lunar periodicities of disturbance among patients in mental hospitals. Those we call "insane" are, perhaps, often more at the mercy of psychic fluctuations than other men, having less capacity for asserting independent *will*-cycles and mental cycles to "modify and direct" internal currents.

"Absolute, abstract motion" is the cause of life. Motion is the absolute rule of life, and motion—"spirit in action"—is will; will, even in those departments of nature bereft of self-consciousness, expresses itself by surges of growth. Were it not so, we could not speak of "will" at all, either as latent in nature or "free" in man. Only where there is the opportunity for fluctuation, for ebb and flow, is there opportunity

for growth. The lower orders of life, though knowing nothing of Will in the human sense, are yet in rhythm with the pulsations which express the "heart" of the entire universe. Their periodic intensifications of energy, perhaps, prepare the way for receiving, into the housing of organic forms, those later integrated arrivals, the beings we call men. These beings, if they learn the laws of life, are able to control all energies entrusted to their care, precisely because *all* forms of intelligence are keyed to the pulsations of will. The fascinating power to stop the "up-breathing" or the "down-breathing," and the power to arrest the heartbeat in self-induced catatonic trance are but external indications of the capacity to control the periodicities of manifested existence. This prospect, we might say, is the ultimate challenge of the second proposition—a challenge fully met only by those who have transcended involuntary periodicity as "Karma-less" beings.

Perilous Balance

Life is no formula, nor a pretty annex to the exact sciences. It avails itself of mathematical, physical and chemical systems; it does not transgress their laws. But, law-obedient, employing every resource of the inorganic world, it is yet, throughout its length and breadth, as individualistic, versatile, complex, and imaginative as creative genius can be. No man can look at an acorn, and foretell the shape of the tree to be.

What runs in the plant world, runs in the sister realms with the same unpredictable forward surging flux, and where the currents are confluent development seems carried far beyond the borders of the mathematical or the logically probable. Here we are among life's most delicate and inextricable relationships.

For the fates of living things are bound together, and a wise man can grow wiser, learning it. The perilous balance, the dangerous adventure, the thirst, the needs, the crashing end—they are impartially allotted to us all, tall man or taller tree. What we the living require is most of all each other. Progeny we must have, company, provender, friends, and even enemies. The whole long vital experiment on earth is symbiotic by chains of cause and relation past glib explaining.

—Donald Culross Peattie

THE POWER TO STOP

THE paramount difficulty experienced by many individuals is their seeming inability to overcome the tendency to inertia, and arouse the will to initiate necessary courses of action. For others, however, to stop activity once begun becomes an almost insurmountable hurdle. The first class of individual is obviously struggling with the quality of indifference, called by the Hindus *Tamas;* while the second group is involved in the fierce, active quality of *Rajas.* The inability to pull the reins of interest is a subtle vice, though seldom viewed as such because it manifests frequently in those conscientiously engaged in the doing of "good" works. But their attachment to the sensation of doing and the compensation of apparent accomplishment blinds them to the extent of their involvement and consequent slavery. Even "duty" overdone would appear to be no duty done at all.

Any vehicle of transportation unequipped with an adequate braking device is a serious menace. So with man's powers. The power to concentrate, all will admit, is an invaluable power; yet if unduly prolonged and concerned solely with one's desires, it becomes obsession. To become true directors of the mind, we must, according to Mr. Judge's introduction to Patanjali's *Yoga Aphorisms,* "use the will . . . in such a way that instead of permitting the mind to turn from one subject or object to another just as they may move it, we shall apply it as a servant at any time *for as long a period as we wish,* to the consideration of whatever we have decided upon."

So, also, with the art of speech, one of the most powerful potencies at man's disposal. The prevalent over-use of this faculty is an obvious cultural malady. How frequently do earnest promulgators of the Theosophical philosophy, carried away by the missionary spirit, lose the opportunity to stop at the crucial moment; a few unnecessary words makes of them "Theosophical bores," open to the charge of fanaticism. The inspiring art educator, Robert Henri, in his book *The Art Spirit,* made this prophecy, which one can enthusiastically hope will be fulfilled:

> I believe the great artists of the future will use fewer words, copy fewer things, essays will be shorter and longer in meaning. . . . There

> will be fewer things said and done, but each thing will be fuller and will receive fuller consideration. Now we waste. There is too much "Art," too much "decoration," too many things are made, too many amusements wasted. Not enough is fully considered.

Concerning the methods employed by the Masters of Wisdom, one teacher has written: "The Masters are governed by the law of action and reaction, and are wise enough always not to do that which might result in undoing all their prior work. . . . By going too far at any one time with the throwing-out of great force in the mental plane, the consequence would be that a reaction of superstition and evil of all sorts would undo everything." Some salesmen have discovered this truth (although on a much lower plane) in respect to their "profession." Observation has disclosed that a patron's resistance to sales talk is often revealed by a clenching of the fists, with the hands relaxing as soon as the resistance ceases. Salesmen unaware of this point having been reached may often oversell their merchandise, resulting in waste of energy and loss of sales.

The following observation, contained in her article, "Spiritual Progress," reveals H.P.B.'s keen awareness of our difficulties along these lines:

> Evil is often the result of over-anxiety, and men are always trying to do too much; they are not content to leave well enough alone, to do always just what the occasion demands and no more; they exaggerate every action and so produce Karma to be worked out in a future birth.

Were it not for beneficent Karmic checks, there might be little to deter individuals from their headlong plunge in the direction of perpetual senseless motion. That we can be our own will-born Karmic censor is the heart and inspiration of Theosophy.

Even the scientist, who to many personifies the virtue of calm, patient research, may be addicted to the "can't-stop" vice. In his endless search for facts and more facts, hoping thereby to gain the final answers to life's elusive mysteries, how often does he pause long enough to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize—in short, to understand? The weakness of science today lies not in absence of facts, but in non-comprehension of those facts. The adept, having arrived at the highest exercise of the power of concentration, can deduce the laws of the entire cosmos, it is said, with but a handful of facts before him.

The "Great Man" in Kali Yuga—the acclaimed genius—he, too, is almost always a product of overdoing, seldom of controlled and balanced activity. Such talented individuals may appear inspired, but are not always controllers of the source of inspiration. Consequently, when its presence is upon them, they dare not cease their labors lest the precious moment be gone forever. A real genius, according to theosophical criteria—a perfected man, skilled in all branches of action in every state of mind and consciousness—can start and stop at will, and without detriment, any thought, act, or feeling. However absorbed in a lofty spiritual duty, he can, if necessary, instantly suspend activity on that plane to take up some mundane chore. In his autobiography, Mohandas Gandhi gives this evaluation of one Raychandbhai, who, though apparently not an adept, had a very marked and uplifting effect upon Gandhi's life:

> Raychandbhai's commercial transactions covered hundreds of thousands. He was a connoisseur of pearls and diamonds. No knotty business problem was too difficult for him. But all these things were not the centre round which his life revolved. That centre was the passion to see God face to face. Amongst the things on his business table there were invariably to be found some religious book and his diary. The moment he finished his business he opened the religious book or the diary. . . . The man who, immediately on finishing his talk about weighty business transactions, began to write about the hidden things of the spirit could evidently not be a businessman at all, but a real seeker after Truth. And I saw him thus absorbed in godly pursuits in the midst of business, not once or twice, but very often. I never saw him lose his state of equipoise.

It is a patent fact that the best of virtues are transformed into vices when carried to extremes. Would that imply that every vice is a virtue out of control? Even the curse of selfishness is simply the distortion and accentuation of the natural duty of self-preservation and self-support. What is a lust or obsessive passion but a result of the desire to *prolong* a perfectly harmless and often necessary sensation. Food should be savory, it is held, if benefit would be derived therefrom. The glutton errs solely because he seeks with perpetual appetite its perpetual fulfillment. The pseudo-ascetic condemns sensation, the wise man its non-regulation.

What impels a housewife or businessman, engaged in some "unpleasant" task, to keep at the job long beyond the period dictated by

prudent common sense? Is it love for the work, or the conscientious performance of duty? The reasons may be numerous. Some appear to use work as an opiate to forget troubles, to avoid thinking them through. Some enjoy the sensation of doing, and that supreme but fleeting moment of satisfaction when a task is completed. Others wish to get a necessary job over with and off their mind. The selfish striver for Nirvana or salvation has a similar aim. He is often willing to undergo terrific sacrificial labor for many incarnations in order to get all earthly troubles "permanently" off his mind.

In contrast, there are those with unselfish motivations, yet who seem equally slaves of the over-work habit. For with such, fear of inability to get a job done on time frequently spurs them to anxious, impatient activity. In these cases, knowledge of the cyclic law of Karma should bring a realization that by calmly working with natural law, nature in turn will serve us. "If the right course is followed, there will be time and occasion for all duties and none will be neglected. . . . To live and act fully and rightly in the present is the whole of life; the dynamic force of the brain would then act fully and rightly; and there would be no exhaustion."

How can one determine for himself whether he is controlling or being controlled by any particular task? At any appropriate moment he might ask: Can I stop this activity before its completion? Can I stop this train of thought? Can I stop this desire or feeling? Can I cease and desist in anything and everything at will? Often life itself supplies these tests through the agency of never-ending interruptions to which all are subjected in this age of conflicting demands. If annoyance is our response, or only a partial mental withdrawal from the preferred task, the lesson remains to be mastered.

To the Hindu, the third god of the trinity is Siva, the destroyer, Brahmâ and Vishnu being the creative and preservative powers in nature. Is it difficult to comprehend how such a fierce deity can have so many loyal devotees? Every human being is Brahmâ-Vishnu-Siva combined. Let him beware if Brahmâ and Vishnu alone seem to prevail in him, for without the exercise of the power to destroy the constricting shell of attachment so often erected around present interests, ideals, feelings, interpretations—even loves—there can be no progressive creation and preservation of new, more worthy, experiences for the Soul.

THE WORLD IN FLUX

MORE than a few scholars and historians have drawn a parallel between the present epoch and the declining years of the Roman Empire, finding analogies of moral and cultural disintegration. The parallel is a true one, the analogies apt and pertinent, yet justice is not done without a further comparison. The Theosophical Movement of those days, represented chiefly by the Neoplatonists, was driven underground by the dogmatism of Christians risen to imperial power. Two years after he became Emperor of the Roman Empire, in 529 A.D., Justinian, seeking a reputation for orthodoxy in religion, decreed that no one should teach the ancient philosophy and ordered confiscated the endowments of the Athenian Neoplatonic School. He had the year before made it unlawful for anyone evidencing attachment for the Hellenic religion to hold public office. It was this same Justinian, we may note, who instigated the anathemas against Origen and the doctrine of pre-existence by a Church Council in 543 A.D.

These were oppressions which had been manifesting ever since the murder of Hypatia in 414 by an angry horde of Christian monks, urged on by a bishop who was jealous of the Neoplatonic Girl-Philosopher's following. Porphyry's books were ordered burned by the Council of Ephesus (431) and by a law of Theodosius II (448), the Christians feeling themselves peculiarly vulnerable to Porphyry's analysis of Christian documents, authorship, and chronology, since he is said to have known Hebrew. For centuries after the exile of the Neoplatonists, Theosophy was available to the West only in disguised form—in the ciphers of the alchemists and the Rosicrucians, and, perhaps in the cryptic writings of the *Fideli d'Amore,* a fraternity of poets, among them Dante Alighieri, of the early Italian Renaissance.

In the Introductory to *The Secret Doctrine* (I, xl), H. P. Blavatsky asks the reader to "give all his attention to that millennium which divided the pre-Christian and the *post*-Christian periods, by the year ONE of the Nativity." This she requests for the purpose of exposing the intensive efforts of the Christian dogmatists to wipe out all memory of ancient theosophy—their "erection of manifold bulwarks against any possible return of, or even a glimpse into, the hated religions of the Past; hated and *dreaded*—because throwing such a vivid light on

the new and intentionally veiled interpretation of what is now known as the 'New Dispensation'." A little later, she writes:

> The days of Constantine were the last turning-point in history, the period of the Supreme struggle that ended in the Western world throttling the old religions in favour of the new one, built on their bodies. From thence the vista into the far distant Past, beyond the "Deluge" and the Garden of Eden, began to be forcibly and relentlessly closed by every fair and unfair means against the indiscreet gaze of posterity. Every issue was blocked up, every record that hands could be laid upon, destroyed. Yet there remains enough, even among such mutilated records, to warrant us in saying that there is in them every possible evidence of the actual existence of a Parent Doctrine. Fragments have survived geological and political cataclysms to tell the story; and every survival shows evidence that the now *Secret* Wisdom was once the one fountain head, the ever-flowing perennial source, at which were fed all its streamlets—the later religions of all nations—from the first down to the last. This period, beginning with Buddha and Pythagoras at the one end, and the Neo-Platonists and Gnostics at the other, is the only focus left in History wherein converge for the last time the bright rays of light streaming from the æons of time gone by, unobscured by the hand of bigotry and fanaticism. (I, xliv-xlv.)

What, then, of the "parallel" between that day and this? The parallel applies, so far as moral and political confusion is concerned, but in the world of today, unlike that of fifteen hundred years ago, there are thousands of small springs of human aspiration and inquiry pouring forth their turbulent affirmations. In the East, giant populations are stirring, demanding recognition in the terms of eighteenth-century manifestos of political freedom. All Africa has learned of the Rights of Man. Indonesia, sixth largest nation in the world, honors Abraham Lincoln and Thomas Paine along with her own national heroes. In India, the image of a man who taught that peace is gained by moral power alone will never be forgotten. In Europe, new social experiments are proceeding, independent of political sanction, in which freedom and brotherhood are the keynotes.

In the field of science, many of the predictions made by Madame Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* have either come true already or are presaged by other developments. The astral body has been empirically defined in biology, if not metaphysically confirmed, through a wide range of experimental discoveries. In psychology, the direction, in-

creasingly, is toward the *moral* orientation which both H.P.B. and Judge declared was lacking in this branch of Western science. Medicine has already entered upon vast reforms, and philosophy, even academic philosophy, is beginning to cast an eye Eastward, toward ancient Buddhist and Upanishadic verities—and upward, toward metaphysical speculation of a serious sort. With every decade one finds a new vocabulary shaped—some of it jargon, it is true—but some of it opening the way for embodiments of spiritual ideas. The one great Theosophical prophecy for this century, so far as the world itself is concerned, is of a world in flux. The flux is here.

There is a sense in which world civilization during the next twenty-five years or so may, in its own terms, overtake and meet the energies of the Theosophical Movement. The day may be even less distant when students of Theosophy will no longer find themselves speaking an alien tongue when they "talk" Theosophy to friends and acquaintances. In any event, there can be little doubt of conjunction of ideas and attitudes in days that are to come. Students wonder, sometimes, about 1975, and the modes of action that will be chosen by the Teacher and teachers of that cycle. Whatever these teachers do, they will, we may be sure, follow the example of Krishna: "Whatever the path taken by mankind, that path is mine, O son of Pritha."

Some sixty years ago, Mr. Judge wrote:

> What a petty lot of matter we spend time on, when so much is transitory. After a hundred years what will be the use of all this? Better that a hundred years hence a principle of freedom and an impulse of work should have been established. The small errors of a life are nothing, but the general sum of thought is much. . . . I care everything for the unsectarianism that H.P.B. died to start.

In those days to come, theosophical "doctrines" may no longer be so distinctive. "Doctrines" could easily give rise to a new orthodoxy. It will not be "correct" beliefs that will define Theosophy, nor even professions of ethics. The doctrines will remain, but their strength and authenticity will not be especially marked and identified because they are held by a tiny minority. The world may easily grow up to seeming doctrinal equality with the Theosophical Movement. But can it grow up to the *"unsectarianism that H.P.B. died to start"?* Here will lie the work of the Theosophists of the future, where lies, also, if we can but see it, much of the work of Theosophists of the present.

REINCARNATION AND MEMORY

(Concluded from page 77)

NOW to return to the life of man, let us observe that, relatively independent of nature's ideals, he has also his own ideals, and that these ideals or aims more or less shape his life. Man's ideals are a compound derived from his appetites, passions, or desires, on the one hand, and his aspirations, hopes, and disappointments, on the other. All these make up the round of his existence, and constitute his sphere of life. As to symmetry man's sphere is thus distorted. With the ego as the center, if man's sphere of life is to be rounded to perfection, his experience should be so adjusted that it shall pertain equally to the two worlds of which his consciousness takes equal cognizance. His thought shall inspire his action, and his action shall again give rise to thought. He will thus act consciously, and designedly, rather than impulsively or passionately. Man would thus have a rounded experience and a range of consciousness that would be both extended and clear, and by so adjusting his experience of the two worlds in which his ego abides, by checking one set of experience with the other, he would have real knowledge of both.

As a matter of fact, there are individuals who in one short life have well-nigh exhausted physical sensuous experience. The aged Faust was exactly in this condition. But in such cases, the development being altogether one-sided and the experience pertaining so largely to the gross and material, the range of consciousness is really narrow indeed. The vehicle of this experience, the physical body, is cast off at death, and the ego thus released and rounding up its experience on the higher or spiritual plane would find itself confined to very narrow dimensions. With little conscious experience in the higher realm which now constitutes the theatre of its being, and its familiar channels destroyed, with no organ of physical memory like the physical brain, there could remain but a confused precipitate in consciousness by which even the recent experiences of earth-life could be retained, and this must soon fade away. The ego now enters on a new phase of existence, in the world of causes, but where it has to work out, or "experience," the

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NOTE.—This article was first published by Mr. Judge over the signature, "Harij," the pseudonym of Jirah D. Buck, in Vol. IV of the *Path,* 1889-1890.

effects of its recent life on earth. When these have run their course and become exhausted, let us say that it returns to life on earth. Nothing remains of its former life save only precipitated results. The former body is destroyed, and the senses of its former life changed beyond recognition. In other words, nothing remains of the former personality. The precipitated results as impulses to new activities belong to the individual life, or to the real ego. Thus the personal and the individual memory differ as do the elements of a compound from the precipitated result in life's alembic.

Memory as a faculty of man is one of the normal functions of the human brain. It is the record of the process of events, external objects, in relation to sensations and feelings occurring in consciousness, instigated by will or desire, or passively experienced or submitted to. The brain is the organ of memory, the physical basis within or upon which is recorded this moving panorama of events. The pictures of memory are associated incidents, brought to consciousness through the channels of perception, feeling or emotion. In the exercise of the faculty of memory, "recollection," we recollect these experiences by suggestion; the order of association of events enables us to gather again the links of the chain. Memory is the faculty, re-collection its function, and the brain is the center to which aggregate and from which radiate this group of experiences. These brain pictures are moving panoramas and concern events, and they can no more be repeated than any two other objects in nature can be duplicated. They may, however, be approximately recovered. Such recovery is at best a faint, disjointed and imperfect echo of their originals. The external objects have changed or disappeared; the feelings and emotions have changed or cannot be again experienced. An idea wakens the echo of past experience, and the result is *remembrance.* If *by an effort of the will* we recover the chain of experiences, it is *re-collection.* Memory, remembrance, and recollection are all phenomenal in character, that is, they are moving events occurring in time. The brain and its function belong to the same category. Therefore, repetition is impossible, and recovery is never more than partial or approximate. All these belong to the physical side of memory. But memory has another side, viz., the *noumenal.* To illustrate: Let us suppose certain events occurring in time and brought to the individual consciousness, and let us number these 1,2,3,4,5. Sensation experiences these events, and memory

records within the brain both the facts and their *order of occurrence.* An idea by association spontaneously wakens the echo of the former events, and we approximately *remember.* We search for these events consciously by an effort of the will and we approximately *re-collect,* always, however, with missing links, either as to order or strength of details. Now let us group our numbers 1,2,3,4,5 = 15. We have now the *sum* of the previous experience, the details of which have disappeared. The will can no longer recover the details 1,2,3,4,5, and the sum of these, 15, bears a different relation to consciousness. We have *"forgotten"* the details past all recovery, but an experience once had can never be *as though it had not been.* It has wrought its effect, and if it is ever in any way recovered or recalled it is a *reminiscence.* Physical memory is to reminiscence what the elements of a mixture are to a compound. In one we have separate details, and an orderly sequence of relations. These belong to *time.* In the other we have the precipitate occurring in life's alembic, and this belongs to *"eternity."* The first is phenomenal; the second noumenal, upon which time has ceased to act, for it has become part of our very selves. Memory belongs to the personality of time and sense. Reminiscence belongs to the permanent individual. Memory is the field-notes in the realm of thought. Reminiscence is the permanent record in the realm of intuition, the title-deed of the permanent possessions of the soul *(ego).* (See *The Key to Theosophy,* pages 124 and 125.)

Our illustration from the well-known facts of chemistry carries us still further. Reminiscence as compared with physical memory is in no sense a loss, but a far higher result. No knowledge that could possibly be derived from the study of the uncombined elements oxygen and hydrogen could ever pre-suppose water, and nothing short of analysis would show that water is a union of these two substances. Oxygen and hydrogen seem to have disappeared altogether, and something entirely different to have taken their place. Definite association seems to have brought to light latent properties hitherto unsuspected. They have passed from the plane of elements to that of compounds. Even so are memory and reminiscence related. The details of experience as the result of sensation and consciousness, when precipitated as resultants, become motives, causes, instead of results, and so color all future experiences. These having become part of the ego, are carried along with it; not as accretions, but as essences. Here is the logical basis of

intuition, as rational as anything we know of physical memory. In the long journey of the soul, even during one incarnation, it is not lumbered up and loaded down with accretions of memory. In place of the car-loads of ore we have the portable ingots of bright metal. We learn by experience; not by the mere record of its facts, but by the potency of its results. If the record were all, it would soon become, indeed, a lost record of a dead language, a shadow upon a wall, leaving its own trace, but presently so overlaid by other shadows, so confused and blended, as to be past all recovery. Reminiscence is to memory what the spirit is to the physical body,—that which alone gives it life and renders it immortal. Are not these facts and relations common experience in our present life? Let us see.

"Time is but the space between our memories; as soon as we cease to perceive this space, time has disappeared. The whole life of an old man may appear to him no longer than an hour, or less still; and as soon as time is but a moment to us, we have entered upon eternity. * * * Time is, then, the successive dispersion of being."—(*Auriet's Journal,* page 2.)

From birth to prime the faculties of man unfold; from prime to old age the faculties wane. In the natural order this unfolding and waning are really a transmutation. In early life the sensuous sphere predominates, and both the intellectual and spiritual are in abeyance. In adult and more advanced life the sensuous sphere wanes and the higher faculties take control. This is the natural order, and it is seldom seen, for there are few natural lives. The follies of youth are more often the harvest of age, dead-sea apples in place of the ripe fruit of the tree of life, while repentance and remorse embalm the living corpse of a wasted life and slighted opportunities. These are unnatural lives, and the real faculties of man are never thus realized. Mediocrity—the slumber of the soul—is, at best, the result of unnatural lives, and old age even, when reached, is miserable beyond description. What is called talent is usually a partial and unsymmetrical awakening of the soul from the dominion of the senses. Talent does with ease that which mediocrity accomplishes with great difficulty, if at all. In the ordinary life of the world nothing short of real genius carries man out of himself and suggests the real nature of his being. Genius does with ease that of which mediocrity never even dreams, and of which no mere talent is capable. Genius dreams of the true, and gets glimpses

of the essential being. Mediocrity follows; talent commands; genius knows and seldom stops to reason; it is beyond reason. "Time is the supreme illusion." "To escape by the ecstasy of inward vision from the whirlwind of time, to see one's self *sub specie eterni,* is the word of command of all the great religions of the higher races."

Mediocrity has little of either reminiscence or intuition, but may develop physical memory very largely. Talent has flashes of intuition, but is rather bias than illumination, a withdrawal of perceptions and faculties from other realms, to concentrate them on one sphere. Genius is another name for reminiscence, an ecstasy of inward vision, the essence of many memories, the synthesis of former experiences.

Physical memory is the record of passing events, but is not the preserver of experience. Physical memory is but the outer husk of experience. Experience relates to feeling and consciousness; memory to time and sense. Memory relates solely to the past, to that which is illusion. Past, present, and future,—what illusions! The past is dead, the future is not, and these constitute the present as a fleeting unreality. Never until consciousness is severed from time and liberated from sense, does man realize that he *is.* In the outer sphere of man's life his faculties are related to the panorama of events, and these he perceives only in detail and in succession. In the inner sphere of man's being he knows *all at once.* This is true even in dreams, where the events of years pass in review in a moment of time. Memory grasps at the days and attempts to hold the slow-plodding years. Reminiscence has dissolved all these in the waters of oblivion, only to preserve their essence as motors, intuitions for future guidance. These are but logical deductions from our present experience, without assuming any future life. If, however, in the present life man is able to free his consciousness from the illusions of sense and time, he comes to know of essential being, and only then does he begin to correctly interpret the things of time.

All that we know of the brain shows it to be the organ of physical memory, and shows, moreover, that any change of its structure or perversion of its function impairs or obliterates memory. Cases of disease have been known from which individuals have recovered with complete oblivion of nearly all the past. Adults previously well-educated have forgotten even how to read, and have had to begin all over again like children. In some cases there has been a slow and gradual recovery of

the past. In others there has been little recovery of the past. The normal function of the brain has been arrested in the middle of a sentence, memory has been thus entirely suspended, and insanity or imbecility has supervened; after the lapse of months memory and consciousness have returned, perhaps from a surgical operation, and the broken sentence has been completed. Similar cases often occur in the annals of surgery.

The forgetfulness of old age is proverbial. The tablets of memory first refuse to record new impressions. The things of yesterday are forgotten, and the memories of youth return, mere glimpses of a summer day or a night of sorrow. These also in turn disappear, and insensibility and imbecility often supervene. The man again becomes a helpless child leaning toward the great mother's breast, longing for rest and sleep.

If this is so often the record of the life of man whom "three score years and ten" reduce to imbecility, and with memory already departed, how can it be possible that, when the brain is decomposed and resolved back to its original dust, it should still perform a function which it so often loses before death? If memory fades as the brain decays, and consciousness displays itself on an entirely different plane after death, and for a thousand years, as we count time, lives a subjective life, the former records of memory are not only barred by "death," but even the bias given to consciousness fades also. If, therefore, reincarnation should occur, there would not be the least reason to suppose that the memory that derived its form and experience from the contour and development of the brain and the circumstances of its development, and that has been decomposed a thousand years previously, should adhere to the ego now embodied in another race and time with a new brain and a renewed consciousness. So far as memory is concerned, this is a new creation; and so far as individual consciousness is concerned, the former personality has been annihilated.

What we call memory, therefore, as a function of the organized brain perishes with the body.

If memory is the temporary record of passing events, and both the events and the record belong to time, is there not something in man that records memory itself, thus bridging the chasm of "death" and anchoring every experience of the soul to the real *ego?* This is precisely the nature of experience of which memory is the matter side,

related to sense and time, and of which reminiscence is the spirit side related to essential being. And here again it is unnecessary to assume a life beyond the present, for the present experiences prove this to be so. It is but the subjective side of our present every-day experiences, and belongs to our *mode of consciousness.* In order to realize this in any large degree it is only necessary to withdraw our consciousness gradually and persistently from the illusion of the senses to the ecstasy of inward vision, that is to gradually elevate the plane of consciousness. Man may thus come to *know* the super-sensitive world precisely as he knows the things of sense and time, viz. by experience. He may furthermore realize that the latter are pure illusions, while the former are the only realities. The evidence of things unseen will end thus in fruition; the unseen and the unknown become the things seen and known. Human experience on this superior plane is also fortified by analogy and by the orderly processes of nature. If we assume the continued existence of the soul *(ego),* we have also to assume the continuance of its *method of knowing,* else we annul consciousness itself. The consciousness of the ego and its real method of knowing, viz., by experience, are all that enable us to predicate continued existence. If consciousness is now displayed on both the objective plane, through the medium of the senses, and on the subjective plane through intuition, reminiscence and the like, then the ego having already experience on both planes in unequal degree, often almost exclusively here on the lower plane, may display itself almost exclusively on the subjective plane, and this often occurs in trance and related conditions. This is the key to the higher consciousness and diviner life.

One-third of our present life is practically divested of memory. When the plane of consciousness is shifted in sleep, memory reveals its true character as belonging to matter and time, and is in no sense essential to existence, or consciousness.

Man's immortality is therefore within his grasp, his destiny is within his own hands, and he may recover the substance of all his past while he realizes his birth-right even now.

> "He who has not even a knowledge of common things is a brute among men: He who has an accurate knowledge of human concerns alone is a man among brutes: But he who knows all that can be known by intelligent energy is a god among men."

THE SCIENCE OF BALANCE

WHEN one has risen permanently superior to the opposites he is a Sage. Of him it is said he has wrought to the purpose that made him man, and with the Buddha he may cry of desire and aversion, pleasure and pain, " . . . THOU, I KNOW THEE! NEVER SHALT THOU BUILD AGAIN THESE WALLS OF PAIN." The personal idea, compounded of liking and disliking, exists no more, for he has become a force for good alone. He has become what is sometimes called the "practical occultist," co-operator with Nature and sharer of her secrets. But why should it be thought necessary to attempt becoming a co-worker with Nature at all, and how is it done? What is Nature?

Nature is the dynamic balance of the polar opposites, whether these opposites be known as love and hate, spirit and matter, or the centrifugal and centripetal forces. Beyond duality, sustaining it, synthesizing it, is THOUGHT—the Potency of Nature.

He may become co-worker with Nature who has learned how, through thoughtful, impersonal action, to adjust and help to maintain the balance of the two great opposites in Nature. Says Patanjali, "The work of the ascetic is neither pure nor dark but peculiar to itself." A "practical" sage has acquired a certain eminence of human evolution, earning him the responsible privilege of being instrumental, though always under cyclic law, in regulating the forces that affect human destiny.

Not so with the run of mortals. Our actions, springing from ignorance of a dominant philosophical purpose to life, cause schisms and antipathies, and set force against force instead of resolving the conflict of the opposites. Erroneous concepts beget darkness and Nature groans throughout in travail—thrown into dis-equilibrium by the thoughts of men. Should one Force outweigh the other, then equipoise —the characteristic of motion in the heavenly spheres—departs from earth's rotation, and all earth's beings suffer the cataclysmic ravages of war, disease, and sorrow. For the disturbance embraces all.

To bring material objects to balance on a pair of scales objective to touch and sight is a simple enough matter. Something is added, or something is taken away and physical equipoise is arrived at. An alge-

braical equation is soon worked out, too, when both quantities of the equation, the x factor included, lend themselves for solution. And in the realm of metaphysics, or mind, the equation is similarly sought. But there it is more difficult to perceive. One has no ready-made sets of quantities to balance against each other, and the formal schools have not yet reached the point of making available formulae for equations in the mental and psychic realms. No doubt Western modes of psychology are slowly at work on it, and something of this kind may be expected of the future; but as yet attempts are largely directed at descriptions of the lesser psychological states, rather than in terms of actual metaphysical measures as such. The psychology of the elder East has long possessed terms and measures actually applying to these inner parts, with many and varied formulae of applications differing with the Schools. But is it not always a question how well persons of Western birth and temperament can adapt and apply Eastern formulae of this nature? Many have tried and are trying; doubtless there are those who succeed in spite of the antagonism of Western culture for the subtle metaphysics of the Orient. But it is Theosophy as *root Psychology* which furnishes the guides by means of which the student may work out the mathematics of his own inner problems.

The attempt to think in equated, self-balancing terms itself sets in motion the indispensable tendency toward restoring the whole man, complete. Thought is force, and thoughts evolve through forceful exertion.

Mind-culture unlocks latent, ancient deposits and brings to birth new talents. The world were a poor place did not each soul have capacities susceptible of a development peculiarly its own, capable of being assimilated to all others. Each man becomes a creative Potency in Nature when he reaches in fact self-sustaining individuality. Each is a Thinker. The powers of the Thinker are great, rooted in the All. The human psycho-physiological nature has its forces, fluids and currents—psychical, astral, mental, magnetic, vital, physical—which are ever at work perpetuating all parts of the functioning instrument. This fact is sensed by every student. They are a portion of the reflected soul-endowment; the life of the mortal machine depends on their more or less constant equilibration. The mind-entity, standing between mortal and immortal being, reflects the play of forces from both sides. The lower energies are capable of producing turbulence, but this may be

dispelled by application of the energies of faith, intentness, benevolence, equanimity; these generate an equilibrium which ramifies throughout the man.

Manasic thinking is not a reality until the thinking process can be adjusted, through growth of the organs of thought, to a different level. The habit of concentrated thought comes with determination out of regard for definitely held aims and principles. Such is the will-basis.

Suffering is the result of continued bondage to forms; evil, born of ignorance, must be counteracted by the force of its opposite. The searing, flaming strength of hate can be neutralized only by the strength of love. Disharmony will not be discharged save by harmony. Clarity of vision is not attained in the absence of patience. And the armor of the righteous, the weld of capacity and faculty, descends not upon those without the will to perceive and to conquer the illusion of the separate self.

Thinkers are brothers all, of one Family. All may have the same single object and aims, one constant end in view. All can be actuated by a single vision. When the vision is once more gained, the "opposites" are no longer the manager of destiny.

These are the rungs of virtue of the occultist's ladder: to think, to dare, to will, and to remain silent. But they are more than rungs of virtue. They are the *laws* of the occultist's life, and these laws he will not violate. By acting according to the transcendental virtues, letting the hour be struck by Nature, he may gain the favor of the Great Mother, who is herself the embodied working of the laws of harmony and love eternal. Not to accept the keys held out by Nature to her treasures, not to take the road shown by Nature, not to recognize the demands to her service—is man's fatality.

The pantheist mood of joyous acceptance certainly arises, at least in part, from the feeling that the whole of earth is a home, the whole of creation a brotherhood, that wherever the head be laid the heart always has a roof over it, that wherever life is encountered a brother is found, be it brother man, brother monkey, brother shark, or even brother streptoccocus.

—EDMOND TAYLOR

NOTES ON THE KEY

TWO of the most important subjects which may be considered from a Theosophical perspective are dealt with in the opening of Section XIII, entitled, "On the Misconceptions about the Theosophical Society." The first is that of asceticism, concerning which H.P.B.'s remarks certainly may be considered as crucial deviations from both religious and materialistic conventionality. The student will note, however, that H.P.B. does not undertake anything like an exhaustive analysis of asceticism in the *Key,* dealing only with the counteracting of "prevailing conceptions." She appears to wish, first, to inform the inquirer that Theosophists "never impose any hard and fast obligations in this respect," but that, secondly, one whose karmic readiness fits him for the special disciplines of practical occultism must have exhausted or passed beyond the usual "ties and wishes which bind him to the world." H.P.B. further states that the life of self-denial, or, more properly, a life consecrated by self-abnegation, cannot proceed by rule or rote. She provides no "ascetic formulas," yet at the same time asserts that some of the ultimate secrets of beinghood can never be revealed to those who have not reached entirely beyond the psychic sway of the senses and the vicissitudes of emotional bondage which accompany psychic involvement.

All supplementary reading on this topic expands upon this duality of Theosophic orientation in regard to asceticism. The *Lucifer* article "What is Truth?", for instance, contains many clarifying passages. First, at the opening of the article, H.P.B. emphasizes an integral connection between the quest for truth and self-discipline:

> In every age there have been Sages who had mastered the absolute and yet could teach but relative truths. For none yet, born of mortal woman in *our* race, has, or could have given out, the whole and the final truth to another man, for every one of us has to find that (to him) final knowledge *in* himself. . . . Still each of us can relatively reach the Sun of Truth even on this earth, and assimilate its warmest and most direct rays, however differentiated they may become after their long journey through the physical particles in space. To achieve this, there are two methods. On the physical plane we may use our mental polariscope; and, analyzing the properties of each ray, choose the purest. On the plane of spirituality, to reach the Sun of Truth we

> must work in dead earnest for the development of our higher nature. We know that by paralyzing gradually within ourselves the appetites of the lower personality, and thereby deadening the voice of the purely physiological mind—that mind which depends upon, and is inseparable from, its medium or *vehicle,* the organic brain—the animal man in us may make room for the spiritual; and once aroused from its latent state, the highest spiritual senses and perceptions grow in us in proportion, and develop *pari passu* with the "divine man." This is what the great adepts, the Yogis in the East and the Mystics in the West, have always done and are still doing.

In subsequent paragraphs in this article, moreover, H.P.B. speaks of another obstacle to the discovery of Truth, identifying most social conceptions of "respectability" with "Sham, Humbug and Falsehood":

> Now conventionality—pure and simple—is a congenital Lie, as it is in every case a "*simulation* of feelings according to a received standard" (F. W. Robertson's definition); and where there is any simulation *there cannot be any truth.* How profound the remark made by Byron, that "truth is a gem that is found at a great depth; whilst on the surface of this world all things are weighed *by the false scales of custom,*" is best known to those who are forced to live in the stifling atmosphere of such social conventionalism, and who, even when willing and anxious to learn, dare not accept the truths they long for, for fear of the ferocious Moloch called Society.

It is worth-while to pursue the relatedness of these two paragraphs, for together they throw considerable light upon the history of religions. Asceticism and conventional morality have nothing *intrinsic* in common, but, in terms of religious history, the two have often become confused. Perhaps this is because both asceticism and conventional morality involve beliefs in the prime necessity for restraint. Asceticism is commonly conceived to be the "giving up" of various desires and pleasures of sensuous existence, and conventional morality, in every established religion, has resided in negative commandments. The important difference, however, between conventional morality and pure asceticism is that restraint practiced in the interest of the latter is a matter of conserving energy for higher and more meaningful expenditure. This sort of asceticism is not a frightened retreat before the awful visage of sin, but rather a measured progression away from those planes of thought and action which perpetuate ignorance. In the *Key,* H.P.B. writes, "These means must be used intelligently and wisely, not blindly and foolishly; like an athlete who is training and

preparing for a great contest, not like the miser who starves himself into illness that he may gratify his passion for gold."

Religions have almost invariably attempted to institutionalize asceticism, and in so doing have encouraged *unnatural* pretensions to ascetic attainments on the part of believers. In the light of H.P.B.'s remarks, this can be seen to be a grievous error, for asceticism can never be practiced by groups or institutions, nor even by individual obedience to specific recommendations. While it is true that the theosophic life may embody correlative striving and a similarity of aim, purpose and teaching in respect to asceticism, the governing of each one's progress in this respect must rest with himself; "group pressure" may have constructive social usages in some contexts, but has no place in furthering the progressive awakenings of the human soul.

The tendency to materialization, "natural" in Kali Yuga, obviously has focussed strongly upon the subject of morality. Forms of *self*-commandment, originally intended to focus dedication to a higher life "in sanctified solitude," are imitated by rules of conduct advocated by religious and social groups. This politicalizing of morality must be resisted, for the reason that nothing is more dangerous than self-righteousness nor more destructive of clear perception than the belief that one can attain to high morality by following codes or customs. This, it would seem, is the explanation of H.P.B.'s vehement attack upon "conventionality" in "What is Truth?" and also in several passages in *The Key to Theosophy.* Those who mistakenly think that they have understood and achieved morality by following negative commandments are apparently prevented from discovering the *nature* of genuine morality. Thus, the materialized misrepresentations of an ancient, philosophically inspired asceticism become, finally, the enemies of asceticism.

It is probably for this reason, too, that H.P.B. found it necessary to proclaim that she herself was *not* an ascetic, as she did in 1881 in her article, "A Year of Theosophy." Once again she was guarding against the common human propensity to regard asceticism as an exoteric matter:

> It is also imagined that the President and Corresponding Secretary (especially the latter) are, if not actually Yogis and Mahatmas themselves, at least persons of ascetic habits, who assume superior moral excellence. Neither of these suppositions is correct, and both are

> positively absurd. . . . Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky do not pretend to asceticism, nor would it be possible for them to practise it while in the thick of the struggle to win a permanent foothold for the Society in the face of every possible obstacle that a selfish, sensuality-loving world puts in the way. What either of them has heretofore been, or either or both may in the future become, is quite a different affair. At present they only claim to be trying honestly and earnestly, so far as their natural infirmities of character permit, to enforce by example and precept the ideas which are embodied in the purposes and rules of the Theosophical Society.

These statements are clear intimation that H.P.B. felt that asceticism should never be a matter of public reputation, but an entirely private enterprise; and, moreover, an enterprise subject to the karmic fitness of opportunity. In her *Lucifer* article, "Occultism versus the Occult Arts," published in May, 1888, the whole orientation of her discourse is directed towards upsetting over-simplified and superficial conceptions of Occultism and asceticism. She wrote, then, in particular, to those who tended to "rush in where angels fear to tread." Those whose karma does not allow a dedication to full asceticism, she suggests, can only suffer loss of clarity of mind and feeling by ambitious attempts. She writes: "Much of this may be avoided if people will only abstain from rushing into practices neither the nature nor importance of which they understand. No one is expected to carry a burden beyond his strength and powers." A key passage in the same article further indicates that the ascetic life is no casual enterprise upon which one can embark as one would launch himself into some terrestrial affiliation:

> There are those whose reasoning powers have been so distorted by foreign influences that they imagine that animal passions can be so sublimated and elevated that their fury, force, and fire can, so to speak, be turned inwards; that they can be stored and shut up in one's breast, until their energy is, not expanded, but turned toward higher and more holy purposes: namely, *until their collective and unexpanded strength enables their possessor to enter the true Sanctuary of the Soul* and stand therein in the presence of the *Master*—the Higher Self! For this purpose they will not struggle with their passions nor slay them. They will simply, by a strong effort of will, put down the fierce flames and keep them at bay within their natures, allowing the fire to smoulder under a thin layer of ashes. They submit joyfully to the torture of the Spartan boy who allowed the fox to devour his entrails rather than part with it. Oh, poor blind visionaries!

> As well hope that a band of drunken chimney-sweeps, hot and greasy from their work, may be shut up in a Sanctuary hung with pure white linen, and that instead of soiling and turning it by their presence into a heap of dirty shreds, they will become masters in and of the sacred recess, and finally emerge from it as immaculate as that recess.

The doctrine of sublimation of passions has been one of the unfortunate immaturities of Western psychology. None of the destructive or selfish *emotions* can become a part of higher aspiration. Passions *cannot* be "sublimated," though the total energic forces of the sevenfold man can be marshalled and directed to higher purposes. It is interesting to note that with the gradual maturing of psychological science, the word "sublimation" is used less and less, with growing recognition that destructive or egocentric feelings must be eliminated entirely, as never transformable into their opposites. The "animal soul" which must be "killed instead of lulled" *is man's own creation,* a creation which is neither "kama" nor the "fleshly self," but man's submergence in the latter, and a distorted modification of the former. We cannot, clearly, "sublimate" distortions, but only pure energies.

The first passage quoted from "What is Truth?" suggests a final point of emphasis. When H.P.B. states the necessity of "paralyzing gradually within ourselves the appetites of the lower personality," the word "gradually" implies that the only genuine asceticism is an organic part of initiation into knowledge, never negative revulsion from the world of sin, nor ambition to achieve virtue or powers by renunciations.

Desire in itself is not evil. On this point Buddha's teaching must not be misunderstood. Desire for the pleasures, or rather for the joys, that minister to the real self, is wholly good. It is desire for the pleasures that minister to the lower self; it is the desire to affirm the lower self, to live in it, to cling to it, to rest in it, it is the desire to identify oneself with the individual self and the impermanent world which centres in it, instead of with the Universal Self and the eternal world of which it is at once the centre and the circumference;—it is this desire, taking a thousand forms, which is evil, and which proves itself to be evil by causing ceaseless suffering to mankind.

—*The Creed of Buddha*

VITRUVIUS—A ROMAN TEACHER

GENIUS, crest of the evolutionary wave of humanity, yet is ever subject to the laws of instruction. If this were understood the true nature of genius would be realized—that genius is a link in the eternal Guruparampara chain of Teachers. Those who have searched into the lives of the great universal artists find that each had some sort of instruction. Some may have learned from the study of parchment scrolls, cyclopean monuments, paintings, or, directly from the mastercraftsmen. Others turned to Nature for guidance, rather than books.

History often records the achievements of pupils, neglecting mention of their teachers. Creative talent is regarded as an effortless, untaught flame which leaps up spontaneously, dazzling the wondering world. But what canons of design and proportion entered into the schooling of a Michelangelo, a Leonardo da Vinci? Both inherited a tradition of ancient days when all the arts and sciences were inextricably interwoven.

Marcus Vitruvius Pollio was a Roman architect and engineer during the reign of Augustus. He is the only ancient writer on the art of architecture whose works have come down to us; yet nothing is known of him except what can be gathered from his own writings. Frontinus, in his work on "The Aqueducts of Rome," mentions Vitruvius, and most of what Pliny says about methods of wall painting, the preparation of the wall and other practical details of building, is taken, almost word for word, from Vitruvius, though without acknowledgment of the source.

Vitruvius speaks of himself as being low in stature and at the time of writing being bowed down by age and ill-health. His celebrated treatise, "The Ten Books on Architecture," was dedicated to Augustus with the words, ". . . in the following books I have disclosed all the principles of the art." He recorded rules and canons of proportion which were previously taught within the secrecy of the Grecian Mysteries. "It is Vitruvius who gave to posterity the rules of construction of the Grecian temples erected to the immortal gods; and the ten books of Marcus Vitruvius Pollio on Architecture, of one, in short, *who was*

an initiate, can only be studied esoterically. . . . Modern architects may not altogether have neglected those rules, but they have superadded enough empirical innovations to destroy those just proportions." (*The Secret Doctrine* I, 209 fn.) In later days a failure to understand Vitruvius' meaning sometimes led to curious results. For instance, a medieval custom, not uncommon in England, of placing rows of earthenware jars under the floor of the stalls in church choirs, appears to have been an attempt to follow out suggestions of Vitruvius as to the acoustical advantages of placing bronze vases around the auditoriums of theatres.

The Platonic method of reasoning, which starts with one general view and descends from the Universal to the individual, is the method adopted in mathematics—"the only *exact* Science." It is not customary to think of the arts as closely linked with the precise science of numbers, although Geometry—among the Mathematical Sciences—is specially related to Architecture. And it is through this doorway of Architecture that the famous Vitruvius introduces us to the fundamentals of all artistic education. He believed with Plato and the Neo-Platonists that geometrical figures express progressive stages in the manifestation of Cosmos. A study of Vitruvius' ten books will show time and again his view of the interdependence of the arts of man and their relationship with the laws which order the beauty of the Universe. The first book begins with a description of "The Education of the Architect":

> The architect should be equipped with knowledge of many branches of study and varied kinds of learning, for it is by his judgment that all work done by the other arts is put to test. . . .
>
> Neither natural ability without instruction nor instruction without natural ability can make the perfect artist. Let him be educated, skilful with the pencil, instructed in geometry, know much history, have followed the philosophers with attention, understand music, have some knowledge of medicine, know the opinions of jurists, and be acquainted with astronomy and the theory of the heavens.

The great mathematician, Pythagoras, taught that the Cosmos was produced, not through or by number, but geometrically—that is, following the *proportions* of numbers. In this way number underlies every form, just as number guides sound through rhythm and vibration. A knowledge of music and geometry was even required before a student could be admitted to the school of Pythagoras. In the cosmology of Pythagoras, moreover, the elements correspond to five geometric

forms known as THE PLATONIC SOLIDS; the Greeks believed that number lies at the root of the manifested universe. In this system, not only does one geometric form unfold from a previous one (as Tyndall observed in the melting snowflake, see *Transactions* p. 143), but these same numbers set the limits to the formative hand of Nature. Therefore, it is not surprising to find three of the five Platonic Solids based on that most primitive of Nature's forms, the triangle. The Neoplatonist, Proclus, wrote: "The equilateral triangle is the proximate cause of the three elements, 'fire,' 'air' and 'water,' but the square is annexed to the earth."

According to the cosmology of Pythagoras, each geometric form corresponded to an element of Nature. The following summary is furnished by Plato:

THE PLATONIC SOLIDS

FIRE	4 equilateral triangles	Tetrahedron
EARTH	6 squares	Cube
AIR	8 equilateral triangles	Octahedron
ETHER	12 pentagons	Dodecahedron
WATER	20 equilateral triangles	Isosahedron

By beauty of shapes I do not mean, as most people would suppose, the beauty of living things or of pictures, but, to make my point clear, I mean straight lines and circles, and shapes, plain or solid, made from them by lathe, ruler and square. These are not, like other things, beautiful relatively, but always and absolutely. . . . If arithmetic, mensuration and the weighing of things, be taken away from any art, that which remains will not be much.

Just how familiar geometric figures apply to the floor plans of buildings may be seen at a glance in the illustrations to Morgan's translation of *Vitruvius,* published by the Harvard University Press. Here can be seen the practical application of these words of Plato, with such graphic clarity that no further comment is needed.

The proportions of the human body were profoundly respected by the Greek artists of the classic age. Though a number of Greek architects and sculptors are supposed to have written books on the symmetry of the human figure, the only work that has survived is contained in these same ten books of the first century. "Architectural symmetry," Vitruvius says, "was obtained by the Greeks through the human figure." The determination of the principles involved followed the dis-

covery that the members of the human structure were commensurate with the body as a whole. Leonardo da Vinci is known to have studied this instruction of Vitruvius, since one of his drawings illustrates a passage in Vitruvius, describing proportions of the human body, and accompanied by a free rendering, in Leonardo's handwriting, of Vitruvius' text (see Plate 48 of *Leonardo da Vinci—The Artist,* by Ludwig Goldscheider, Phaidon Press). The drawing shows how man's body may be circumscribed by both the circle and the square. In the words of Vitruvius:

> The navel is naturally placed in the centre of the human body, and if a circle be described of a man lying with his face upward and his hands and feet extended, it will touch his fingers and his toes. It is not alone by a circle that the human body is thus circumscribed, as may be seen by placing it within a square. For if we measure from the feet to the crown of the head, and then across the arms fully extended, we should find the latter measure equal to the former; so that the lines at right angles to each other enclosing the figure, would form a square.

Nor was Leonardo unique in his interest in Vitruvius. Bramante, Michelangelo, Vignola, and earlier architects were careful students of "the ten books," which through them have largely influenced the architecture of European countries. The effect has been remarkable; during the classical revival Vitruvius was the chief authority studied by architects, and his precepts were accepted on every point.

How persistent is the illusion that in our present way of looking at things, we have, if not the final truth, certainly the direct, the only avenue of approach to it. And yet the ways of thought which governed men's minds, which appeared inevitable five thousand years ago, are as strange and unfamiliar as the speech and institutions of that time. Did I say five thousand years? I should have said five hundred. Look back to the opinions universally held in Europe in 1435. The beliefs of savages excite our amusement. Ours will amuse our successors a few hundred years hence, and theirs, no doubt, be recalled with amazement a millennium later. Our business is not to solve problems beyond mortal powers, but to see to it that our thoughts are not unworthy of the great theme.

—W. Macneile Dixon

YOUTH-COMPANIONS ASK—AND ANSWER

WHAT methods and attitudes of mind can best be used in attempting to discuss controversial doctrines with religious devotees CONSTRUCTIVELY?

Too often "*attempts* to discuss church doctrines CONSTRUCTIVELY" with strongly religious people are frustrated by a typical church attitude of annoyance at any sort of questioning. Rejection without consideration seems to be an automatic habit of many "all-out" Christians. It seems quite understandable, however, that believers who are truly bent on living "the good life" might be deeply skeptical of the clever intellectual criticisms which are offered by so many. Some religionists have a philosophy of *doing;* thus their natural channels of expression and receptivity are in those terms. Referring to that "fast diminishing small minority of those whose sinless lives reflect the glorious example of the Prophet of Nazareth," H. P. Blavatsky candidly states in the Preface to the second volume of *Isis Unveiled* (a volume particularly "directed against theological Christianity—the chief opponent of free thought"): "Their charity, and simple, child-like faith in the infallibility of their Bible, their dogmas, and their clergy, bring into full activity all the virtues that are implanted in our common nature. We have personally known such God-fearing priests and clergymen, and we have always avoided debate with them, lest we might be guilty of the cruelty of hurting their feelings; nor would we rob a single layman of his blind confidence, if it alone made possible for him holy living and serene dying."

Unfortunately, even in the twentieth century, this is still not the only type of religious zealot. Self-righteousness (supported by organized Christianity from the beginning) still finds expression through the authoritarian armor of rules of holy conduct, while motives go ignored. Thus, with emphasis on appearances, plus the powerful societal currents of materialism, worldliness and hypocrisy, we find plenty of "all-out" *professing* Christians; after all, it's fashionable to be "virtuous," *i.e.,* to donate generously to the Community Chest, conspicuously support the right causes, etc. It seems useless to consider what may be the best ways and means of reaching such personalities in polite, mutually

enlightening discussions, since, from a theosophical point of view, an almost entire re-orientation of values is needed, and this is not to be achieved until overwhelmingly believed-in fetishes are ousted.

Throughout *Isis Unveiled,* H.P.B.'s approach involves an almost systematic exposure of the errors and conceit attached to Western Man's Religion, Science and general customs. In the Preface to the first volume, however, we discover her attitude to be impersonal, never vengeful or hateful. "*Isis,*" she wrote, "is meant to do even justice, and to speak the truth alike without malice or prejudice. But it shows neither mercy for enthroned error, nor reverence for usurped authority. . . . Toward no form of worship, no religious faith, no scientific hypothesis has its criticism been directed in any other spirit."

To those doctrinal Christians whose narrow-mindedness allows them to claim that both truth and salvation may be realized through one sect alone, we allot in due fairness the term, fanatic. If and when such a person is encountered, our striving for a charitable state of mind and a quiet voice will probably constitute the best approach or method. The bandying of heated arguments with such a person is definitely not a "brave declaration of principles," but a sort of attack.

Tending away from the generally negativistic answer thus far given to the question, there is a dimension that encompasses our personal relationships with religious devotees which should also be considered. Many young people seek to give expression to truly religious instincts through "religionism." Mentioning theosophic tenets or discussing religion with personal friends, we feel, should be entirely subservient to those times when there seems to be a *natural* receptivity to such ideas. Developing a delicate sense of the fitness of things is strategic in preventing barriers from sealing off the sensitive mind of a friend.

Yet *one* "method"—which is really mostly an attitude—seems invaluable for contributing to relationships with others and also for developing creative thought in ourselves. That is the searching and flexible attitude of mind of the synthesizer. There are some who believe, perhaps, that since H.P.B. made a tremendous synthesis between the essential ideas underlying Eastern and Western traditions of philosophy, religion, and science, students of Theosophy today can profit little from individual, miniature attempts at "synthesis" in proportion to what may be gained from studying "the books." On the contrary, it seems to us that every individual attempt at analyzing radical factors

involved in history and current politico-religious phenomena tends to strengthen the qualities of independent manasic inquiry. In relation to this discussion, the synthesizer's ability, first, of recognizing basic truth under any shape or form (*e.g.,* the symbolic Bible), and then the further ability to correlate known theosophic teachings with such verities, make it possible to supplement the theosophic vocabulary with terms common to others of different background. In the case of a highly intuitive religious devotee, when it is possible to point out that our "Father in heaven" (is) "that deific essence of which we are cognizant within us, in our heart and spiritual consciousness," there are good chances that such a suggestion will find a corresponding awareness within him, enabling those in conversation to establish some sort of rapport. This method, conceivably, holds good for other classes of people such as those interested in social and political reform, idealism, "humanistic" psychology, etc.—depending upon their basic views as to justice, morality, evolution, free will, and immortality. No doubt, all of the key questions and answers needed in developing the "method" can be found in "the Books," but a friend is first interested in *your* synthesis of what the books say. This is crucial.

It is always necessary to clarify our own intentions and evaluations of what the duty of a theosophical student is in such a discussion. What would our aim be? Would our aim be to knock away people's pillars of belief from under them in order to prove that Theosophy and Theosophy alone has the Truth; or would it be that of H.P.B. in the early sections of *The Key to Theosophy?* Her first aim seemed to be to help establish an *attitude* toward the perplexing and seemingly unjust world about the inquirer which would make Theosophy understandable, rather than completely to confuse him by reciting absolute, abstract postulates of teaching. If our own minds have so much difficulty in grasping the three postulates of *The Secret Doctrine,* even though we *desire* to grasp them with all our heart, inquirers would certainly be even less apt to comprehend, especially if the person is lacking in practice of thinking in "abstract" terms.

An important point that could be made in establishing an attitude of open-mindedness would be the "eclectic" idea—that of universal, eternal teachings, which are but rejuvenated or uncovered periodically at auspicious times and places by Great Teachers, of whom Christ was one. With an emphasis made on the differing needs of various people

to whom Initiates come, it can be shown that Buddhism and Christianity, now appearing as two opposed faiths, are representative of those conditions under which Jesus and Buddha taught, rather than of differences between the teachers.

In reading the various books by H.P.B., we find that she presents the fundamentals in many different ways. In other words, she uses whatever form or manner of emphasis she sees will achieve the desired end. The Truth is Truth, no matter what it may be clothed in. Moreover, she does not give us an easy system to follow in order to have the philosophy down "pat." Thus it follows that an open mind and understanding of the needs of others are essential. The United Lodge of Theosophists "regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization," yet it does not say specifically what the "true service of Humanity" is.

How may one diplomatically face the "collection fiends" in a typical business office, where such collections reach ridiculous proportions?

One answer that can be given is that since the promulgation of theosophical work seems of primary importance, ultimately, to all men, most of our spare resources are diverted to that cause.

The problem of contributing to some projects and not to others involves several other considerations besides money. Giving as part of a group is a collective action only in terms of the method. Giving oneself or one's possessions is still essentially an individual action, the ultimate value of all gifts being seated in the motive. So the choice remains with each person alone. Furthermore, it is important in maintaining an individual sense of integrity and resistance to "mob action" that this obligation not be overridden. The nature of the cause needs to be analyzed. Does it arise from a spontaneous desire to benefit others or from a spirit of genuine comradeship among fellow workers which would justify cooperative action, or is it a matter-of-course submission to custom? If a cause of any kind is worthy of financial support, it seems natural to give something of oneself, also, and if one cannot give financial support, one can still give of one's time, labor, suggestions, and, not the least important, *enthusiasm.* In short, there are numerous means to assist a cause one deems worthy, and a trivial or unworthy one needs no assistance.

DIVIDING ETERNITY

PAST—Present—Future: these somehow, for us, divide Eternity. For the child no defined past or future exists. Comes the time, however, when a not-to-be-denied awareness breaks through; when one's thoughts, perhaps, linger tenderly with a treasured memory, whilst a reluctant ear is turned to the persistent call of an impending future; or, perhaps, one closes tight his eyes upon familiar things, more easily to escape their influence, as he rushes toward the promising light of an unknown future rich with potentialities which the past has made.

For the Adept no Past or Future exists, as we know them. The continuity of these two is seen in the present—is the present. To the consciousness, every action has three determinable phases: the subjective inception, or cause; its objective manifestation, or effect; and the resultant effect-causes—subjective, with endless ramifications—some to be known almost at once, others to wait further objective manifestation for many lifetimes hence. And so, on and on, *within the whole,* a continuous play of forces, an increasing inter-relatedness of things, events and persons.

True it is that an action done is a "dead thing." But the thought and feeling that produced and gave colour to the action left their impress on living substance, called matter. How many impressions do we "leave behind" in the course of a day, a year, a decade? These impressions, pleasant or otherwise, may remain quiescent—still as a reflection in the waters of a pool, until memory stirs them. Through memory and the association of ideas suggested principally by familiar things, these impressions disturb, distract, and, literally, bedevil one. "Kill in thyself all memory of past experiences," says *The Voice of the Silence.* "Look not behind or thou art lost."

Anon, this cumulative Past looms defiant against its creator. The brighter his future or the nearer his goal, the more sinister is its outline and the power of its influence. It is a time of reckoning. Will he *stand* against the foe? Only if he knows himself as that neutral Centre which is not "the things it did, the thoughts it had"—or will have—but, verily, THAT within which all forces play and arrive at equilibrium and harmony.

"THE SLIGHTEST CAUSE"

SHALL we judge an action according to the intention or motive behind it, or is the motive, the intention, shown by the action? On this seesaw of unsurety most of us teeter away our days and our years. We seek to associate with others in work of mutual benefit, and this question plagues us: If the work goes well, does this indicate that our motives are right, and if the work ploughs through heavy seas, should we decide that our intentions must be at fault? We try to discover what is right action by observing those around us, yet we can never be certain that "when the motive is good every action becomes legal," any more than we are safe in assuming that an illegal action must stem from an improper motive.

Let us take an example from history. Columbus discovered America. Was his action good or bad, his motive right or wrong? What did he *intend* to do, and why? What did he accomplish, and in what did he fail? Shall we ascribe to him the regrettable features of the "education" the natives on these shores received from the Christian invaders? What part of the glory that America has achieved in the past 400 years shall be deemed his—and what part of the ignominy?

One of the Theosophical adepts wrote to A. P. Sinnett: "We, half-savage Asiatics, judge a man by his motives. . . . But you have to remember that you are at a hard school, and dealing now with a world entirely distinct from your own. Especially have you to bear in mind that the slightest cause produced, however unconsciously, and with whatever motive, cannot be unmade, or its effects crossed in their progress—by millions of gods, demons, and men combined." Since the Masters govern themselves by Karma, we may paraphrase this by saying that *Karma* judges a man by his motives, but it also repays him, down to the last farthing, for every "cause produced."

Why should this be a "hard school"? Because we can rest neither on our motives nor on our actions—we must ever look at both from new points of view. There is what has been called "two-dimensional action"—the simple form of action-and-reaction that is traditionally embodied in the law of an eye-for-an-eye. This form of action is almost instinctive, always imitative, and may be retaliative. Then there is "three-dimensional action"—the consideration, before we act or react,

of what the consequences will be, and of why we want to act in that fashion. The "fourth dimension" in human action goes yet another step into causes, involving an inquiry into why *the other fellow* acted the way he did—what he hoped or expected to gain, and for what purpose. There may also be a "fifth dimension," having to do with what would be the right course for both, regardless of personal feelings or instincts: what is the best that can be accomplished with the elements present? It is in relation to this fifth dimension that the Master's words on the inevitable effect flowing from *every slightest cause* may fittingly be considered. For until we are able to assess fully the consequences of an action, we shall never completely understand the *significance* of circumstances, of personal relationships, of actions and the motives which prompt them. And therefore may never obtain what we desire —whether our motive is good or evil.

We tend to think of action as something like a hard lump, one unbreakable mass deposited in some "bank" of Nature and returned to us, intact, at a future date. It might be better to consider our actions as being broken down and assimilated by Nature, just as the stones become sand and the sand becomes mineral elements which, deposited in the earth, are reabsorbed into some vital system—perhaps in a plant —and continue, in various transformations, to play their natural parts in the living universe.

How often we say that human action is *mixed,* without appreciating the opportunity this gives us for *mixing in the good!* How many chances do we have to join with others in a common endeavor—and then decline, because the project is not entirely to our liking! How many programs have we abandoned because a particular line of action did not seem to be successful—never thinking that we might not be recognizing the success!

If Karma judges by motive, and the slightest cause has its inevitable effect, we have a "new school of action" to enroll in. This school has a motto: "Whoever does what he can, and the best he knows how, does enough for us." Let us do what is presently required. There is always something to be done, if we do not scorn small chances and little openings, and there is always much to be accomplished by one who is cheerfully and confidently active in all the ways open to him. "The smallest stream can wear away a mountain."

ON THE LOOKOUT

The Fundamentals of Nature

Theosophical readers often feel a special kinship with the naturalist. Those who recognize a majesty in all the rhythms and pulsations of the natural world, and draw sustenance therefrom, seem also to have an impersonal perspective on the affairs of men, and may be said to have become Theosophists in this sense. H. P. Blavatsky writes suggestively of the need for reading the "book of living nature," and of the rewards bestowed upon all those who have undertaken the study.

The philosophical naturalist certainly does "study" all three of the familiar Theosophical truths. He feels, for instance, and often expresses, the Wholeness of nature, the interdependence of its many federations of living things, and the basic unity which underlies; and is, therefore, inclined to be a gentle and an understanding man. He also becomes aware of the universality of cyclic law, and thus is apt to have a highly developed instinct for justice. He sees all life as an evolution, an adventurous voyage which is both purposeful and exhilarating, and he sees that there is no death for any living thing, but only endless transformation.

"The Desert Year"

One of the finest examples of "natural philosophy" so inspired, and thus inclining in a Theosophical direction, is Joseph Wood Krutch's *The Desert Year.* "Perhaps," writes Krutch, "as the deists supposed, man is an essential link in that Great Chain of Being which stretches unbroken from the most imperfect up to perfection itself."

Krutch's essential perspective upon human affairs is beautifully illustrated by a passage emphasizing the constant need for solitary reflection and meditation:

> Not to have known—as most men have not—either the mountain or the desert is not to have known one's self. Not to have known one's self is to have known no one, and to have known no one makes it relatively easy to suppose, as sociology commonly does, that the central problems are the problems of technology and politics. It makes it possible to believe that if the world has gone wrong—and seems likely to go wronger—that is only because production and distribution

are out of balance or the proper exercise of the franchise has not yet been developed; that a different tax structure . . . points the way to Utopia. It is to forget too easily that the question of the Good Life—both the question what it is and the question how it can be found—has to do, first of all, not with human institutions but with the human being himself; that what one needs to ask first is not "What is a just social order?" or, "In what does true democracy consist?" but "What is Man?"

Consciousness, Grandest of Facts

That question neither the usual politician, nor the usual economist, nor the usual scientist has ever asked, because he has never been alone. No man in the middle of a desert or on top of a mountain ever fell victim to the delusion that he himself was nothing except the product of social forces, that all he needed was a proper orientation in his economic group, or that production per man hour was a true index of happiness. No such man, if he permitted himself to think at all, ever thought anything except that consciousness was the grandest of all facts and that no good life for either the individual or a group was possible on any other assumption. No man in such a position ever doubted that he himself was a primary particle, an ultimate reality.

An Interesting Plan

Respectable universities, before they confer the degree which certifies that the recipient is now wise in philosophy, in science, or in sociology, commonly require a minimum period of "residence." They might well require also a supplementary period of "non-residence," to be passed neither at the university nor at any other populous place but alone. They might consider the fact that a knowledge of one's self is as important as a knowledge of Latin and two modern languages. Already having an athletic field, they might even persuade some wealthy alumnus to make the gift of a Thebaid to which candidates could retire for six months. I can think of nothing more likely to change the direction of our thinking, and many who agree on nothing else agree that it ought to be changed.

The Perspective of Reincarnation

Somehow it comes as no surprise to encounter passing but suggestive references to the possibility of reincarnation in Krutch's writing. He is one who has truly absorbed the philosophic tone set by the "transcendentalists" Thoreau and Emerson, and also seems to have a special affinity for Wordsworth—and to all these men the idea of reincarna-

tion had meaning. Speaking of his first associations with the "austere" yet inspiring desert, which was later to serve as setting for profound reflections, Krutch writes:

> For three successive years following my first experience I returned with the companion of my Connecticut winters to the same general region, pulled irresistibly across the twenty-five hundred miles between my own home and this world which would have been alien had it not almost seemed that I had known and loved it in some previous existence.

Again, speaking of the need to rid himself of anthropomorphism in the study of nature, Krutch indicates that the full development and appreciation of what Edmond Taylor calls the "pantheistic mood" is not something come by "on demand":

> The trouble is, I suppose, that the pantheist keeps forgetting that his God is not a jealous God and that, since All are One, no part of the whole is offended when another part is praised. He believes in many voices, many prophets, many incarnations, even; and he is grateful for them all.

Second Fundamental Proposition

It is an enjoyable task to "locate" in Krutch's writing other ideas crucial to the establishment of the three fundamental propositions of *The Secret Doctrine.* He develops, for instance, aspects of "the third proposition" in reminders that an aspiring beinghood is discovered in every department of nature, each link in the great chain of being being a link also in our path toward more complete understanding of ourselves.

A particularly clear passage on the Law of Periodicity reveals the breadth of mind which enables Krutch to turn all observations to the service of philosophy. Kalpas and Manvantaras seem somehow implicit in these paragraphs:

> This "precessionary" cycle of the equinoxes is complete in a little more than twenty-five thousand years and that is the longest cycle of recurring events about which we know anything. Yet it has fulfilled itself many times since the earth's history began and may fulfill itself many more before it ends.
>
> Beyond the limits of that cycle, even the most learned astronomers can only guess at the meaning of a perceptible drift in the whole solar system. Is that drift part of some vaster circling which it will take even

longer to complete and are we swinging through some orbit too vast to compute, or are we *really* drifting away from some point in space to which we shall never return, toward some unimaginable destination? That question is beyond even speculation. Perhaps we are following the curve of space and perhaps, after an infinity of time, we will come back again to where we are now, back from a journey which took us an infinite distance. The one thing we do know is that the most fixed of known points is not really fixed at all.

The Untrammelled Soul

Mr. Krutch has at all times represented, and represented ably, that *non-theological* view of the soul which is the cornerstone of both Theosophic ethics and psychology. Along with his natural attraction to Wordsworth, Thoreau, and Emerson, he lives in the same climate of ideas as that made known to many Theosophists by W. Macneile Dixon in *The Human Situation.* Though the last portion of *The Desert Year* is almost entirely a nature lover's notebook, many of the book's 253 pages reflect an outlook that is definitely Theosophical in scope, making this volume, we may think, among the most worthy of its kind.

Lunar Effects Baffle Scientists

Periodically items are published which call attention to the apparent influence of the moon on affairs of earth. Everyone is familiar with the influence of the moon on the tides and plant life. It has also been discovered by those who work with the mentally unbalanced that the full moon brings increased disturbance—in fact, any psychic disorders appear to intensify during this period. For this reason Warden Duffy inaugurated the policy of having extra guards stationed in San Quentin on full moon nights. Now, scientists feel that the waxing moon has a definite influence on conception and birth cycles.

"Moon Tie-up With Births Being Studied"

A Los Angeles *Times* article (Aug. 18) with this title contributes:

> Notable effects of the moon upon conception and birth have baffled science. This is admitted in a new issue of *Nature,* the British Scientific journal.
>
> Two years ago the Methodist Hospital of Southern California discovered that almost twice as many babies were born in the institution from new moon to full moon as when the moon was waning.

The Methodist Hospital survey showed that so many more babies are born when the moon is waxing than when waning that days off in the obstetrical wards are arranged according to the moon's apparent orders to the stork.

In one lunar cycle 133 babies were born in the hospital from new moon to full moon and only 77 during the last half of the cycle. Moreover, a survey of six years of hospital records proved that in 62 of 72 complete cycles (28-29 days), the strange rule of Luna was authenticated. A slight tendency was found for the greatest number of babies to be born at the start of a full moon.

The moon appeared to have no effect on the sex of children, although a definite tendency was noted for babies to be born between midnight and dawn. Scientists consulted said they suspected that the lunar tie-up with the time of births might be related to a possible effect of the moon upon the time of conceptions.

Some Points of Departure

The Theosophical philosophy states that not only does the moon affect the earth and its inhabitants, but that we are affected by the other planets connected with our solar system as well—and they by us. In order to understand the meaning and nature of this "influence," it is necessary to comprehend the philosophy behind the theosophical teaching of "the seven principles in man and nature." A few suggestions may serve as helpful points of departure. One such suggestion occurs in the June 17 issue of *The Theosophical Movement* (published in India), in an article, "The Karma and Rationale of Planetary Influences." This article gives some valuable insights into the relationship of the moon to the earth, indicating the nature of true astrology. The following quotations, among others, are there assembled:

> The ancients, whose "ignorance" is assumed . . . fully realized the fact that the reciprocal relations between the planetary bodies is as perfect as those between the corpuscles of the blood, which float in a common fluid. (*Isis Unveiled,* I, 275.)

In Robert Crosbie's article, "Planetary Influences," we find:

> The Moon, the nearest planet to us, influences us physically, astrally and psychically, for of like nature are the forces in the Moon. . . .

Philosophical Rationale of Lunar Influence

The moon is a "dead" planet, yet according to the philosophy the living "principles" of the moon are incarnated in the earth. The moon

is the astral "mother" of the earth and all things subsisting on it. From the moon came the Lunar Pitris, those astral intelligences which are ourselves as personalities. Therefore, when it is said in *The Secret Doctrine* that "it is the spirit of the earth in its triple unity that builds the physical body, attracting to it the Spirits of Life and forming his *Linga Sarira*" (astral form), it becomes plain that the "Spirit of the earth" is in reality the Spirit of the Moon. It seems a logical deduction that during the strong waxing phases of the moon there should be a greater influence, astrally and psychically, on that area of life which has to do with providing the necessary vehicles for the embodiment of consciousness. As *The Secret Doctrine* points out again, "The Endowers of man with his conscious, immortal Ego are the '*Solar* angels'—whether so regarded metaphorically or literally." The moon has nothing to do with the higher ego.

Alternative "Influences"

Man, in his higher nature, is "solar," and in his lower principles (personality) is "lunar." Every being, we might then say, needs to guard against aspects of the lunar influence, as it may be obstructive to the purposes of the higher self. Perhaps when we become wiser in philosophy our births might not be governed by *lunar* phases and influences at all, but might, when we have transformed our personalities into living souls, result from solar influence—that is, a direct act of the Will under the direction of Buddhi-Manas. Theosophical tenets provide an opportunity for us to study and reflect upon these matters in a philosophic manner. It is not sufficient to know that we are under the influence of the moon or any other planet. To know *why* is the point of importance.

Moon Stresses on Earth Crust?

John J. O'Neill, science editor for the New York *Herald Tribune,* gives his reasons for believing that the moon has something to do with the occurrence of earthquakes. In his column of July 27, he states:

> The fact that the sun and moon by affecting the earth's gravitational field, can trigger earthquakes is the basis of the predictions which the writer has published in the Herald Tribune for the last three years. That the theory can be sound, and a prediction be accurate but still miss fulfillment at the time given, is indicated in connection with Monday's (the Tehachapi) earthquake.

> Sun and moon exert maximum forces when they are on a line with the earth at new and full moon, which take place alternately at fourteen-day intervals. Research by the writer reveals that the Sierra region is more sensitive to the new moon combination, and the San Andreas, and other parallel fault regions, respond to the full moon situation.
>
> In the southern band across the state. . . . twenty-one major earthquakes were analyzed for sun-moon relations. Fifteen of these earthquakes took place in the seven and a fraction days preceding full moon and three of them in the equal period before new moon.

While Mr. O'Neill may attribute the correspondence between earthquake and moon cycles to gravitational pull, theosophists may ponder a possible connection with what Mr. Judge states in *The Ocean of Theosophy* to be one of two causes for earthquakes: "electrical and magnetic changes which affect water and earth at the same time. These have the power to instantaneously make the earth fluidic without melting it, thus causing immense and violent displacements in large or small waves. And this effect is sometimes seen now in earthquake districts when similar electrical causes are at work in a smaller measure."

The Idealism of Science

Students who have read and reread H. P. Blavatsky's "What is Truth?", last reprinted in THEOSOPHY for June, are particularly well-prepared to understand why H.P.B. regarded "honest science" as an "ally" of the Theosophical Movement. For Devotion to Truth, in its fullest sense, includes both the "head" and the "heart" doctrine, and when those engaged in scientific discovery or speculation have felt an inward dedication, a steady desire to cut through their own biases and preconceptions, they are on the same voyage of self-discovery as that mapped by some of the earliest and greatest sages. During the cycle of the past hundred years, as prophesied by H.P.B., many devotees of science have transcended combative materialism and swelled the tide of human progress with deeper and more philosophical thought.

Forgetfulness of Self

An article in a recent *Saturday Review of Literature* (Sept. 27) by George Sarton, "An Historian's Plea for Science," is an excellent demonstration of the thesis presented above. Sarton writes:

> The chief aim of scientific research is not merely to help mankind in the ordinary sense but to make the contemplation of truth more

easy and more complete. This implies a deep conversion of the spirit which can only be achieved by a long and rigorous discipline. One must forsake all kinds of wishful thinking, and all thinking which is not constantly subject to verification and correction. One must educate oneself to become more and more experimental and objective. One must learn to conceive the truth one is aiming at and living for as an ideal which may remain forever out of reach, but which one may and should approach more and more closely.

When this scientific objectivity is carried high enough it leads to a peculiar kind of disinterestedness which is far more fundamental than the disinterestedness of the most generous man. It is not so much a matter of generosity as of forgetfulness and abandonment of self.

Extirpation, Not Alleviation

The constant theme of H. P. Blavatsky's discussion of social and economic problems in *The Key to Theosophy* is that while the bringing of solace and comfort to suffering humanity is an immediate duty of every Theosophist, according to his means, the aim of the Theosophical Movement is the necessarily slow *re-education* of mankind. While one feels compassion for those who are the victims of superstition and error, the real problem is to root out these hydra-headed monsters from their psychological lairs. Prof. Sarton views the philosophical history of science thus:

The history of science is the story of an endless struggle against superstition and error; it is not a vivacious and spectacular struggle, but rather an obscure one—obscure, tenacious, and slow. The resistance of science against every form of unreason or irrationality is so firm, and yet so quiet, that it is almost as gentle as a non-resistance would be, yet unshakable.

The diffusion of science is of the most peaceful kind, and unless it be artificially entangled with irrelevant issues it causes no adverse reaction. Intolerance and injustice can be alleviated by merciful deeds, but they can only be extirpated by the slow penetration of the scientific spirit.

"Internal Unity of Mankind"

Many of Prof. Sarton's remarks evidence an attitude approximating the three objects of the original Theosophical Society. He views comparative cultural and religious study from this perspective:

Hindu, Chinese, Japanese—were accomplishing similar tasks in different ways. How is it that all those efforts converge as they do?

> I have treated elsewhere that stupendous fact. Common traditions might explain a part of it, but even when such community of tradition cannot be assumed, the independent efforts remain consistent to a degree, and the isolated discoveries may be still fitted in a logical sequence. This can only be explained by postulating the internal unity of mankind and the internal unity of science.
>
> Science is of its very essence international and interracial; it is thus the strongest bond of union between the peoples of the earth. It aims at unanimity, not concerning any preconceived idea, but concerning the very system which is being developed by the unconscious and continuous collaboration of all peoples in a task independent of themselves and infinitely superior to any one of their desires. Scientific work is one of the highest forms of altruism.

"A New Life of the Spirit"

There is subtlety as well as depth in "An Historian's Plea for Science," revealed in a rare way at the conclusion of the article. Professor Sarton's conception of true science, as apart from any of the errors perpetrated in its name, leads him to see that the essential values of science must be realized by individuals; neither *essential* science nor *essential* religion can be comprehended "corporately," by groups. Sarton writes that "we need to be taught a new life of the spirit, humble, gentle, and free," and therefore sees that uncompromising idealism must always be in terms of individual self-discovery:

> One can fully speak of the sanctity of science, as well as of its humanity, but it is better not to speak too much of it, for it is a subject far too confidential and too precious for expression. Also it is better not to encourage the constitution of a new class of hypocrites. If there be sanctity it will flourish best in secrecy; nobody should ever know it, except perhaps much later. A plea for an uncompromising idealism of which our age is more deeply in need than of anything else. We need to be taught a new life of the spirit, humble, gentle, and free.

Comparative Religion

Few Theosophists, we may imagine, have had much occasion to familiarize themselves with the philosophy of Mohammedanism. Yet there certainly exists a tacit obligation to respect the great Islamic culture which preserved the writings of Plato and the Neoplatonists throughout the darkest ages of Europe. As many scholars have pointed out, both philosophy and science reached an advanced stage of progress

among the Arabs during the fifth and sixth centuries, while Europe, crippled by a paralyzing variety of theology, reflected only the most circumscribed intellectual life.

A modern Moslem periodical, *The Islamic Review* for October, 1950, affords many reminders that the breadth of cultural understanding for which the scholars have praised the Arabs is still apparent among enlightened Moslems. H.P.B.'s remark that Christianity had become the only *exclusive* religion in the history of the world may be noted in conjunction with Mohammed's command that *all* prophets of all peoples be accorded due respect. This point is emphasized in an article by Dr. Hamid Marcus who takes from the *Koran* this text: "In religion let there be no compulsion." Dr. Marcus comments:

> Does not tolerance mean peace and friendship, so that one can dwell comfortably and at ease in the tent of Islam? And is not the fact that everyone may freely express the opinion of the heart, a democratic feature of Islam?

"This Exhaustless Doctrine"

> But let us get to the main thing. The Prophet proclaims emphatically that each century will produce a reformer, who will harmonize the eternal truths of the Divine Revelation with the conditions existing in his time. He will lead mankind back to pure morality, if they have departed from it, and he will show how the new questions and problems, which arise at all times, can be solved according to the eternal word of God; for it is not the eternal truth which is outstripped in time by the thinking humanity, but only that chaos of interpretations and prejudice, which gradually accumulates in every religion. To remove these the Prophet proclaims an indefinite series of future reformers. Praise and glory be to Muhammad, who looked so far ahead. For if we speak of world-religion we think, as a rule, only of its spatial expanse across the whole length and breadth of the globe, not of the changing times and their needs. Islam, as the religion of eternal self-renewal, is not only valid for all space but for all time.

A Conception of Karma

This summary of Islamic teaching in respect to reward and punishment has clear Theosophical overtones:

> Development is an inner progress, the thought of development is, however, contained in the words of the *Qur'an,* that the human being already prepares by its own deeds its paradise and hell in this life.

For whatever the human being does, arises out of that which it produces from its instinct and the gifts with which nature has provided it and the manner in which these are developed. This again is an example of how Islam leads us on the 'right way', the middle course which is equally distinct from the extremes. An extreme is exemplified in the unbridled state of sensuality and spiritual drift which we find among the so-called civilized nations, and also among the decadent populace of the cities of Europe, which cannot deny itself any pleasure. Christianity also demands an extreme, which, on the contrary, seeks to exterminate human nature.

The Middle Way

The broad intellectual tolerance of Islamic culture, evident at least in its leading minds, is more a social doctrine than a religious one and thus, perhaps, we should link Islamism to Confucianism. While it may be said that the "middle way" of compromise leaves out the *uncompromising* demands of the highest religion, the Islamites are encouraged to hold good political counsel and to pass beyond shibboleths in their evaluations of the highest type of society. Dr. Marcus claims that Islam is primarily "a religion of the thinking human being," and unites spontaneous love of democracy with the recognition of the hierarchical principle in man and nature. The following paragraphs will be particularly interesting to those who have studied Ortega's *Revolt of the Masses:*

By the study of Islam our thoughts gain an extraordinary independence and power, for the Prophet does not lay down a rule with only one interpretation, as for example, 'Marriages are inseparable' or 'You shall never take up arms', but he shows us the law with its subtle individual differences according to which we must regulate our daily life as each individual case demands and according to which we can also decide what is right and what is wrong. Islam does not desire serfs, but free men, men of science, aristocrats, who are able to decide for themselves. Spiritual aristocracy, however paradoxical and mystical, is nevertheless the hypothesis for every true democracy; for democracy means that everybody may help with his advice and co-operation when the fate of the whole community is at stake, and that it is only possible and holds out a promise of blessing, if all stand spiritually on a high enough level to judge for themselves, and if they have practical knowledge of the matter. Democracy, therefore, takes for granted that all members of the community are spiritual aristocrats, and Islam intends to be a 'democracy of aristocrats'. Is it not really *the* great task, which is put to each human being as a

member of humanity, that we should be educated up to a democracy of aristocrats?

"MAKE YOUR OWN LAWS"

Sometimes, surprisingly enough, even a newspaper magazine supplement like *This Week* unearths philosophical reflections. The issue for Oct. 19 contains a short essay, "Words to Live By," by Sir Gladwyn Jebb, permanent representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations, which we submit in its entirety. Here, certainly, is a Theosophical attempt at synthesis between the essence of true science and the essence of true religion, as applied to ethical precepts and moral conduct.

The first paragraph has for a text the lines, "He noblest lives and noblest dies who makes and keeps his self-made laws." Sir Gladwyn continues:

> This little known verse, from a poem by Sir Richard Burton, has always had an attraction for me.
>
> I don't mean, of course, that there is no such thing as absolute truth. Still less do I mean that whatever anyone *thinks* is good, is necessarily good for him. But this is obviously not what Burton had in mind. What he meant, I suggest, is that everybody should make an effort to discover the good and true by himself, and then set standards based upon his own findings. In doing so there are the great masters to guide us; but it is still the individual who must seek and find.

SELF-DIRECTION

> So we should "make our own laws" in the sense of embracing some principles which justify, at any rate to ourselves, an otherwise purposeless and meaningless existence. That is hard enough, but "keeping our own laws" is harder. Here one sometimes feels like the Latin poet who said, "I recognize better things and approve them: I pursue worse things." Yet even to *recognize* the good is something: indeed it is a great deal. It means constantly acquiring knowledge, whether in great books or in the great school of life. It means having sympathy and understanding. It means striving. And it means having a readiness, at least, for some kind of personal self-sacrifice.
>
> All of us have occasionally met people who seem to have made and kept their own laws. They are the creative ones. Their personalities are in some way illuminated from within. Perhaps, as the Greeks thought, they have often learned through suffering. But they alone are happy because, as Burton suggests, they are fulfilling their manhood.